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SUBJECT: MONTENEGRO - 2006 COUNTRY REPORT ON TERRORISM

REF: STATE 175925

¶1. Montenegro became independent on June 3 this year, after a public referendum on May 21. The Government of Montenegro, before and after independence from the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, has taken a serious and considered approach to combating international terrorism, including terrorism finance. Montenegro is considering making a modest troop contribution, commensurate with its small size (630,000 inhabitants, with 2,500 in its armed forces), to international stability and peacekeeping operations.

¶2. Montenegro does not tolerate the activity of terrorist groups on its territory. Its Administration for the Prevention of Money Laundering, which was established with and continues to receive assistance and training from the USG, works closely and shares information with regional and international Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs). The Montenegrin FIU also conducted local investigations of terrorism finance, and initiated investigations potentially leading to future criminal prosecution in three cases this past year. Montenegro joined INTERPOL in September 2006.

¶3. On September 9, the day before parliamentary elections, Montenegrin police raided arms caches in a suburb of Podgorica, the nation's capital, initially arresting 14 persons, including three foreign nationals, on suspicion that the group planned to carry out armed attacks during election day. The group is described by the Government as comprising ethnic Albanian extremists. On December 7, 18 persons, including four fugitives and, non-exclusively, five foreign nationals, were criminally charged with planning terrorist acts, financing of terrorism, and other acts constituting organized crime. Subsequently, one foreign national fugitive was arrested in Austria upon an Interpol warrant file by Montenegro. The State Prosecutor, in the indictment, stated that additional planning for the terrorist acts took place in Skoder, Albania. (Note: all the foreign nationals arrested and indicted are U.S. citizens. End note.) Some opposition political parties criticized the arrests, claiming the raid was aimed at suppressing legitimate political dissent.

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